

***How Human Rights Can Build Haiti:
The Lawyers, the Activists, and the Grassroots Movement***
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This book tells the story of a team of Haitian and U.S. human rights advocates who work to bring justice to the poor and reverse the sad legacy of Haitian lawlessness and suffering. These brave activists organize demonstrations at the street level, argue court cases at the international level, and conduct social media and lobbying campaigns across the globe. They are making historic claims and achieving real success as they tackle the Haitian cholera epidemic, post-earthquake housing and rape crises, and the Jean-Claude Duvalier prosecution, among other human rights emergencies in Haiti.

Haiti is a haven for suffering. Four out of five Haitians are not formally employed, and most children are not in school. The per capita income is less than \$2 per day. Most Haitians do not have access to a clean source of drinking water. Not coincidentally, a late 2010 outbreak of cholera killed almost 8,000 people, sickened a half-million more, and continues to claim victims.

The current state of affairs is sad but not surprising. Like efforts to rebuild a house without first ensuring a strong foundation and solid framing, emergency relief and even long-term investment in Haiti is doomed to failure until human rights are respected and the rule of law is in place.

History tells us that the only way to transform Haiti's dismal human rights legacy is through a bottom-up social movement, supported by local and international challenges to the status quo. That recipe for reform mirrors the strategy followed by Haitian human rights attorney Mario Joseph, his U.S. colleague Brian Concannon, and their clients and colleagues profiled in this book.

Joseph, Concannon and a growing number of supporters, including human rights experts interviewed for this book, believe that the tipping point for human rights in Haiti can be the grassroots/transnational movement pushing forward the claims of the thousands of Haitian cholera victims. The cholera litigation filed by Joseph and Concannon could force the world's most influential organization, the United Nations, to embrace the rule of law in deed as well as in name. By recognizing the poorest of Haitians as individuals with enforceable rights, the UN can create a global precedent that will have an impact for generations to come.

Together, Joseph, Concannon, and their allies represent Haiti's best hope to escape the cycle of disaster, corruption, and violence that has characterized the country's two-hundred year history. At the same time, their efforts are creating a template for a new and more effective human rights-focused strategy to turn around failed states and end global poverty.